Lambda Letters Project

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Annual meeting announced

By Anne Daniels, secretary

It's almost time for the annual meeting again! The Lambda Letters Project's annual meeting will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2008, starting at 12 noon. You are cordially invited to attend. The meeting will be at:

Shriners Hospital for Children
2425 Stockton Blvd. (between X & Y St.)
Sacramento, CA 95817

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please be sure to sign and return the enclosed proxy form right away. We cannot conduct business unless we have a quorum of one-third of the membership present in person or by proxy.

If you are unsure whether you can attend, please sign and return the proxy anyway. You can revoke your proxy in person if you do end up attending the meeting.

Are African-American women shortchanged?

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

According to the US Census Bureau, 6.7% of California's population is African-American (1). According to the California Department of Health Services (DHS), 3.4% of the state's population is African-American women (2).

But also according to the DHS, nearly 19% of the people living with AIDS in California is African-American and 4% of people living with AIDS is African-American women (3).

This might not seem too bad to the casual observer. The number of African-American women living with HIV is just slightly larger than their percentage of the total population of the state. But these statistics relate to the numbers of people *currently living with HIV*. The statistics on *new infections* is much worse for people of color and for African-American women in particular.

According to the California Office of AIDS, African-Americans now account for about half (49%) of new HIV infections in the United States—most of them through heterosexual contact (4). Women account

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Governor fails the test

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

When I took tests in school as a child, 65% was considered a passing grade. By that standard, Governor Schwarzenegger failed the test this year. The Lambda Letters Project gave him an overall rating of just 55% for his actions on bills sent to him that were supported by Lambda Letters.

We graded him on bills in five subject areas. Those scores, and the score he received for each area, are as follows:

HIV/AIDS issues: 50%
Economic justice issues: 56%
LGBTI issues: 75%
Person of color issues: 45%
Women's issues: 50%
Overall score: 55%

It may surprise most people that the one area in which he got a passing grade was LGBTI issues. But when I went to school that score would still only have merited a C. That is hardly something to celebrate.

The governor's overall score was better than last year, but only by one percent. His overall score in 2006 was 54%. Last year he did considerably better on women's issues (81%) and considerably worse on LGBTI issues (58%). As was true

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Lambda Letters progress report

Letters collected

September, 2007	37,758 letters & e-mails
In all of 2007	282,943 letters & e-mails

Dollars spent

September, 2007	$3,641
In all of 2007	$50,068

Can you help?
Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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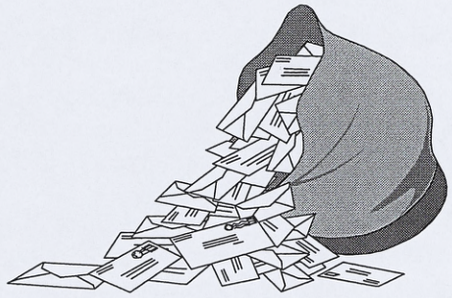

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Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.
In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Economic justice issue

Support federal food stamp program reforms

By Rebecca Chamow, legislative analyst

The Federal Food Stamp Program is a vital tool for helping low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. This program, along with other nutritional programs, will be reauthorized in the Farm Bill in Congress this year, and it is very important for this reauthorization to include increased accessibility and increases in allowances for the Food Stamp Program.

Earlier this year, Congressman James McGovern (D–Mass.) and Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson (R–Mo.) introduced the Feeding America's Families Act of 2007 (HR 2129) to be included in the reauthorization process. In essence, the bill calls for improving benefit levels, expanding eligibility, and improving access to food stamps. It would make several changes along these lines.

First, it would incrementally increase the amount of money given to families each month so that, over time, a typical family of three would receive $37 more each month than they do under the current program.

Second, the minimum benefit for individuals, which has remained stagnant for a very long time, would grow more than threefold. This bill would also grant eligibility for legal immigrants now excluded from the program, and the process of income reporting would be simplified.

In addition to all of these changes in the Food Stamp Program, HR 2129 would reauthorize the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides monthly food packages mostly to low-income senior citizens, and would renew the Emerson and Leland Hunger Fellowship Programs.

This bill would make many important, necessary, and long-overdue changes to the Food Stamp Program. We encourage you to write to your representative in support of this important measure.

LGBTI issue

Transgender people matter too

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

According to the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, an estimated 2–5% of the population are transgender. Thirteen states (and the District of Columbia) have laws protecting the transgender community from discrimination. However, transgender people are still widely discriminated against in employment, medical treatment, housing, and a wide variety of other life-sustaining services.

In the United States, it is still legal to do so. That is why it is so important to include protections for trans individuals, starting with the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Please write Senator Feinstein (D–Calif.) and ask her to support a federal non-discrimination act, and to insist that it contain trans-inclusive language.

According to TransLife.net, the transgender community faces a 70% unemployment rate. In a 2006 Transgender Law Center study, 57% of transgender individuals reported being discriminated against in employment and 60% earned less than $15,300 per year. As a result, many turn to illegal survival trades, which further threaten people's health and welfare. This further results in higher public safety and health costs to the state. It is much cheaper to keep people employed.

According to the Williams Institute at UCLA, cost estimates from the Congressional Budget Office from 2002 show that including sexual orientation and gender identity in federal non-discrimination statutes would increase the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's caseload only 5–7%. So passing ENDA would cost the government far less than the costs associated with not protecting the LGBT community from discrimination.

There are now two versions of ENDA in Congress. One would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. The other would protect all of them except transgender people.

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People of color issue

Support racial equality in health

By Marty Martinez, legislative analyst

Despite significant advances in public health and health care, the health status of people of color in California continues to lag behind that of the population at large. Illness and injury generate tremendous social costs in the form of lost productivity and expenditures for disability, worker's compensation, and public benefit programs. With communities of color becoming a majority in the state, a healthy and productive California will increasingly require the elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities.

The Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2007 (HR 3014) was developed by the chairs of the Congressional Latino/a, Black, and Asian and Pacific Islander caucuses. The bill seeks to eliminate the persistent health disparities that exist in communities of color. This bill will establish community-centric initiatives to coordinate existing resources to address health disparities and promote positive health behaviors. It will also ensure that low-income immigrants can access health care for their children. The legislation will also address work force diversity, culturally and linguistically appropriate health care, access to health care, and data collection and analysis.

By tackling the issue in such a comprehensive way, and addressing the multiple causes of unequal health, this bill will help eliminate the persistent disparities that leave millions of Americans in poorer health and more likely to die prematurely during their most productive years. Please send a letter of support to your members of the House of Representatives today.

Women's issue

Support compassionate care for servicewomen

By Alex Widmann, legislative analyst

Close to 3,000 servicewomen were the victims of sexual assault last year while they engaged in protecting the safety and security of our country, and most were unable to receive emergency contraception (EC). This number has increased 24% in 2006 from the previous year.

Despite bravely placing themselves at risk each day to ensure our well-being, these women are not guaranteed this simple health safety provision. It is important that we take the health needs of our soldiers as seriously as we do their need for equipment, clothing, and food.

A proposed bill amending the U.S. Code section 10 on general military law would ensure the universal provision of emergency contraception to all women serving domestically and overseas. S 1800, the Compassionate Care for Servicewomen Act, was proposed by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D–N.Y.) and sponsored by 13 other senators including Barbara Boxer (D–Calif.).

S 1800 seeks to accomplish this by adding that emergency contraception be included in the basic core formulary, which is the list of over 200 medications legally required to be in stock for provision to soldiers immediately upon request. In essence, this amendment ensures that women serving in the US military have unlimited access to, as well as general information about, emergency contraception at any US military health care facility in the world.

Currently the distribution of emergency contraception is subject to the policies and discretion of individual medical facilities. There is no standing requirement or guarantee of access to this protection. Thus many of the 350,000 serving women seeking emergency contraception are routinely denied.

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HIV/AIDS issue

Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS

By Lorraine Rinker, legislative analyst

The HIV Prevention Act of 2007 was introduced by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D–Calif.) and Olympia Snowe (R–Maine), along with 10 original cosponsors. This legislation calls for implementing a comprehensive approach to prevention strategies funded under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). If passed, S 1553 would repeal the PEPFAR earmark that mandates at least 33% of HIV prevention program funding be spent on "abstinence-until-marriage" programs.

There are 40 million people around the world living with HIV. Every year there are more than four million additional HIV infections—60% of which are among women in sub-Saharan Africa. While the US has significantly increased its funding for international HIV programs over the last few years, our prevention policies do not meet the needs of those most at risk of infection, especially women and girls.

A congressionally mandated review by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) on the first three years of PEPFAR's implementation found impediments caused by the abstinence-until-marriage earmark. The report concluded that there is no scientific evidence that supports the 33% abstinence-until-marriage earmark and that "the budget allocations do not allow program implementers sufficient flexibility to respond to change."

S 1553 seeks to address the problems highlighted in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the IOM reports, and provide local communities the necessary flexibility to achieve the goal we all share—stopping the spread of HIV, especially among young people.

This bill does not prohibit the administration from funding abstinence-until-marriage programs. In fact, if the bill becomes law, the administration would still be able to spend all of the HIV prevention funding on abstinence-until-marriage programs if it decided to do so. This bill simply grants administration and HIV/AIDS workers the flexibility to design the most effective HIV prevention program.

This legislation would yield the following benefits:

- Require the president to use a comprehensive prevention plan for all those at risk for sexual transmission of HIV, youth included
- Allow country teams to determine appropriate allocation of HIV prevention funds for all prevention activities, such as mother-to-child transmission and blood supply safety, as well as promoting abstinence and encouraging the correct and consistent use of condoms
- Increase the flexibility of the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) and country teams to respond quickly to local epidemics and support public health best practices tailored to meet local and cultural needs

Senator Feinstein closed her vocal introduction of S 1553 to the Senate by quoting someone with firsthand experience with the challenges in combating HIV/AIDS under the constraints of the 33% earmark on funds for prevention. She quoted Babtunde Osotimehin, chairman of the National Action Committee on AIDS in Nigeria, as follows:

"Abstinence is one critical prevention strategy, but cannot be the only one. Focusing on abstinence assumes young people can choose whether to have sex. For adolescent girls in Nigeria and in many other countries, this is an inaccurate assumption. Many girls fall prey to sexual violence and coercion. When dealing with AIDS, we must address the realities and use of a multipronged approach to improving education and health systems, one that can reach all of our people."

Please write to Senator Harry Reid. As majority leader in the Senate, he has great power to ensure that a bill is actually voted on in the Senate. He can also do much to ensure that the necessary number of senators votes for a bill. Please urge him to make sure that S 1553 keeps moving and is approved by the Senate and the Congress. Urge him to take this critical global step to preventing the spread of HIV.

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November legislative update

The governor had until October 14 to decide whether or not to sign all bills sent to him. If he made no decision on a bill by that date, it became law without his signature.

This list shows the final status of the bills as of October 15. Our source for this status information is the state legislature's website. Sometimes there is a delay in posting results there. So, in a few cases, we may not yet be able to tell you the governor's action on the bill.

Here is a list of the bills we are tracking at this time.

HIV/AIDS issues

AB 66 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To require that prison inmates be tested for HIV shortly after imprisonment and shortly before release from prison unless the person declines testing. If they are found to be HIV-positive prior to release from prison, inmates' parole officers must be told. Inmates' spouses or domestic partners would also be told. Would require that a care and treatment plan should be devised for each inmate who tests positive. Would require that HIV-positive inmates be referred to treatment after release.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 110 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments that establish clean needle and syringe exchange programs to use state general funds to purchase clean needles and syringes for use in their programs. They can spend up to 7.5% of general funds they receive for HIV education and prevention. But they must match each dollar spent this way with 43 cents of non-state government funds or private funds.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 659 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To urge the development of age-appropriate HIV/AIDS educational materials for youth and senior citizens. Would also request the University of California to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on seniors.
Status: Failed in Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1334 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To allow the distribution of condoms and other sexual barriers to prison inmates.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 443 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow the use for therapeutic insemination of sperm or use of sperm in other advanced reproductive technologies if the sperm donor is found reactive for HIV or HTLV-1.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Watch.

Economic justice issues

AB 1 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To improve children's access to health insurance and delete the citizenship and immigration status requirements to qualify for the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs.
Status: Approved by the legislature but held in the Assembly. Not sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To continue a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who are otherwise uninsurable due to medical history.
Status: Placed in the Senate inactive file. Not approved by the legislature. Not sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 8 (Fabian Núñez, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To create, as of January 1, 2009, the California Cooperative Health Insurance Purchasing Program (Cal-CHIPP), which would function as a purchasing pool for health care coverage by employers.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 12 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the employees of small businesses as a pilot project in Santa Clara County.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 167 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To help people transition from CalWORKs to self-sufficiency by eliminating the limit on assets they can have and still qualify for CalWORKs.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 176 (Dave Jones, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: Current law states that a participant in CalWORKs who receives any child support must turn that money (except $50) over to the CalWORKs program. This bill states that a CalWORKs recipient cannot keep any child support money.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Oppose.

AB 184 (Karen Bass, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To increase the fees paid to Medi-Cal service providers.
Status: Not approved by the legislature. Not sent to the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 428 (Wilmer Amina Carter, D–Rialto)
Purpose: To require that public middle schools and high schools explain to parents what courses students must take to get into college, and tell parents about courses that would give students not going to college a chance to be educated in a skilled trade.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1078 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To delete the maximum amount of savings and interest that a CalWORKs recipient would be permitted to retain. The bill would extend the provisions excluding from income the principal and interest in the designated federal savings plans to CalWORKs applicants.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1413 (Anthony Portantino, D–Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To establish tighter compensation rules and greater transparency in compensation for California State University executives.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

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Legislative update

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AJR 3 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to increase funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

SB 11 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow virtually any two people to register as domestic partners, eliminating the requirement that domestic partners be of the same sex or that one of them be over 62 (in the case of opposite-sex couples).
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

SB 32 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To allow all California children whose family income is under 300% of the federal poverty level to have access to the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. It would also eliminate the rules that deny coverage to some based on citizenship or immigration status.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 42 (Tom Torlakson, D–Concord)
Purpose: To qualify for CalWORKs public assistance, people must be engaged in work activities, with certain exceptions, unless they are enrolled in an approved education program. This bill would also exempt them from work if they have applied for, but not yet been accepted by, an approved education program.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 48 (Elaine Alquist, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the state, to the extent that funds are appropriated, to establish the "Healthy Food Retail Innovations Fund," providing residents of underserved communities with retail food markets that would offer high-quality fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods and encourage retail innovation. Would also require the state to provide grants and loans for land acquisition, business plan development, feasibility studies, refrigeration units, outside technical assistance, and other startup costs. Fund to run until January 1, 2015.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

SB 119 (Gilbert Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require that residential drug and alcohol treatment services for persons aged 12 to 20 be a benefit covered by the Medi-Cal Drug Treatment Program.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

SB 137 (Tom Torlackson, D–Antioch)
Purpose: The state and counties run treatment services for physically handicapped persons under the age of 21 in families with income of $40,000 or less. This bill would change that eligibility limitation to persons in a family with an annual, or equivalent monthly income, equal to or less than $40,000, or that meets the income eligibility requirements for the Healthy Families Program.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 275 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit hospitals from dumping indigent patients on the streets after discharging them from the hospital.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 405 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To require that public middle schools and high schools explain to parents what courses students must take to get into college, and tell parents about courses that would give students not going to college a chance to be educated in a skilled trade.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 785 (Darrell Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To establish forms and procedures to provide mental health care to certain children in foster care.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 840 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To establish a single-payer health insurance program (where the state collects funds from various sources and then pays all medical bills), which would provide affordable health insurance to every person in California.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

LGBTI issues

AB 14 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To prohibit California businesses from withholding services to customers because of the customer's sexual orientation, among other things, or from encouraging other businesses to do so.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 43 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow same-sex couples to marry in California.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

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AB 102 (Fiona Ma, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To allow a woman to retain her maiden name when she marries. It would allow men to easily change their last name to their wife's maiden name when they marry. Would also allow either or both domestic partners to change their name when registering their domestic partnership, using the same simple procedure a women now uses in changing her last name when she marries.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 384 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To provide health insurance to the surviving spouse, domestic partner, or surviving child or stepchild of a deceased federal firefighter who was performing services in this state, upon specified circumstances.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 392 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require employers to allow an employee who is a spouse of a member of the armed forces, National Guard, or Reserves to take up to 10 days of unpaid leave during a leave period of the service member.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support if bill is amended to include domestic partners of service members.

AB 394 (Lloyd Levine, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Education to monitor adherence to the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment requirements as part of its regular monitoring and review of public schools and school districts.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 537 (Sandre Swanson, D–Alameda)
Purpose: To require employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period to care for a seriously ill domestic partner, among others.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 629 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require school-based sex education programs to be comprehensive, age-appropriate, and medically accurate. They must not teach religion or encourage bias against people on any of several bases, including sexual orientation.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 29 (Mike Eng, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To ask Congress to add bans on sexual orientation and gender identity hate crimes to the federal hate crimes law.
Status: Given final approval by the legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

SB 105 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To establish a procedure that will clarify how domestic partners should compute their taxes in light of the fact that federal tax law and state tax law treat domestic partners differently.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 518 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the Division of Juvenile Justice and local juvenile facilities to provide care, placement, and services to children in their custody without discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, among others.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 559 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require that any transfer of property between registered domestic partners that occurred on or after January 1, 2000, and before January 1, 2006, be exempt from reappraisal and increased property taxes based upon a reappraisal. If a person requests reversal of a previous reappraisal, because of this law, on or before June 30, 2009, the county must do it. But the reversed reappraisal would be effective only from the time the request was made.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 727 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To expand the types of people that an employee can take six weeks of partly paid leave to care for, to include the parents of one's domestic partner
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 777 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination in public and private colleges and universities, or discrimination in instructional activities, or in educational materials on the bases of disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic contained in the definition of hate crimes found in California law. **Status:** Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

People of color issues

AB 34 (Anthony Portantino, D–Pasadena)
Purpose: To require the state to create a pilot program to increase the ethnic diversity of the umbilical cord blood supply in blood banks. It would select blood banks in ethnically diverse areas to participate in the program.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 72 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the contributions of Filipinos during World War II.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 174 (Curren Price, D–Irvine)
Purpose: To allow the State Personnel Board to order a state agency that is found to discriminate in its employment actions to take various remedial actions, including payment of reasonable attorney's fees to the employee.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 288 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To fine those who intimidate people to either vote or not vote. Would use fines to pay for voter education programs.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

Continued on page 8

Legislative update

Continued from page 7

AB 295 (Ted Lieu, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To require state agencies, when collecting demographic data, to include categories allowing people to identify themselves as members of particular races or nationalities that are not currently on the list.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 512 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To require that when a businessperson negotiates specified loans or extensions of credit primarily in the languages of Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean, that person must also provide summaries of the loan or credit documents in those languages.
Status: Held in the Senate Banking Committee. May be considered next year.
LLP position: Support.

AB 658 (Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish the Community Homicide and Violence Reduction Program to be administered by the Office of Emergency Services, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health. The program would award grants on a competitive basis to community-based organizations for the development and implementation of evidence-based approaches for homicide and violence prevention, as specified. This bill would require the Office of Emergency Services, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health, to create an evaluation design for the program that will assess its effectiveness. The purpose of the program would be to reduce violence and homicide among African Americans.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 976 (Charles Calderon, D–Whittier)
Purpose: To prohibit a city, county, or city and county from requiring a landlord to, among other things, compile, disclose, report, provide, or otherwise take any action regarding the characteristics of a tenant or a prospective tenant based on the immigration or citizenship status of that tenant. The bill would also prohibit a landlord from independently performing any of these acts.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 21 (Anthony Portantino, D–La Canada Flintridge)
Purpose: To urge the regents of the University of California to establish a student exchange program, or another form of academic partnership, between one or more campuses of the University of California and one or more of the institutions that are classified as historically black colleges and universities.
Status: Failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 2 (Merv Dymally, D–Compton)
Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to give veterans benefits to Filipino Americans who served in the US armed services during World War II.
Status: Approved by the legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

SB 1 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow certain undocumented immigrants to qualify for student aid from certain private sources when attending public colleges and universities in California.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 26 (Joseph Simitian, D–Palo Alto)
Purpose: To require state agencies to allow people to select one or more categories when agencies obtain information about people's ethnicity.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

SB 60 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow the state to issue driver's licenses to certain undocumented immigrants when approval of that action is approved by the federal government as allowed under the federal real ID act.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 192 (Denise Ducheny, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To continue a program for which certain licensing requirements were due to expire in 2008. The program provides a group, employer-provided health insurance program for Mexican nationals legally employed in San Diego and Imperial Counties for medical care provided to employees and their families in Mexico. The doctors providing treatment must meet licensing requirements in both California and Mexico. The bill extends this licensing requirement indefinitely.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

SB 552 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish a program for providing compensation to those who were unconstitutionally deported to Mexico during the 1930s.
Status: Failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
LLP position: Support.

SCR 58 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To encourage schools to teach about the illegal deportations of Mexican American US citizens and legal residents during the 1930s.
Status: Approved by the legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

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Women's issues

AB 28 (Jared Huffman, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To extend the program that allows people to send additional dollars with their state income tax returns, and to ask that the extra money be given to the California Breast Cancer Research Fund.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 76 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to design rehabilitation programs to meet the unique needs of women prisoners.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 225 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To reduce the number of harassing phone calls to another person that is required to trigger penalties for making harassing phone calls. It would make the law tougher on those who harass others.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 268 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To excuse from testifying in court people who attend the hearing but refuse to testify because of intimidation by one of the parties to the court case.
Status: Held in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing postponed by committee.
LLP position: Support.

AB 335 (Kevin De Leon, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow CalWORKs public assistance to be provided to a domestic abuse victim on the basis of sworn statements that he or she became homeless because of domestic abuse.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 435 (Julia Brownley, D–Santa Monica)
Purpose: To require employers to keep wage and job classification records for up to five years. This would allow employees up to five years to file sex-based wage discrimination complaints against employers and collect back wages due.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 502 (Charles Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To enact legislation creating a pilot program in Los Angeles that enables a community-based organization to provide legal advice and aid to victims of domestic violence who are undocumented immigrants.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 603 (Curren Price, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To extend the deadline until 2013 of laws that protect the confidentiality of victims of domestic violence who seek help from domestic violence programs, and of people who are served by family planning programs.
Status: Signed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1275 (Mark DeSaulnier, D–Concord)
Purpose: To allow counties to increase fees for copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, and death records for the purpose of funding governmental oversight and coordination of domestic violence prevention, early intervention, and prosecution efforts in the county—up to a maximum increase of $4.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate Local Government Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1429 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require health care services plans and health insurance contracts to cover the cost of cervical cancer vaccination.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

AB 1679 (Noreen Evans, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To amend current law to allow attorney's fees to be included in support payments due to a child in a divorce or separation case.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing cancelled by the author.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 11 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To declare October 2007 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Approved by the legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

ACR 15 (Sally Lieber, D–Mountain View)
Purpose: To commemorate January 2007 as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.
Status: Introduced.
LLP position: Support.

AJR 4 (Jim Beall, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To ask Congress to end a $25 fee charged to families who do not go on public assistance but who do receive at least $500 in child support with the help of a state child support collection program.
Status: Approved by the legislature. No action by the governor needed.
LLP position: Support.

SB 265 (Gloria Romero, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To state that the Division of Juvenile Justice shall explore options to provide programming for female offenders outside of division facilities. On or before January 1, 2009, the division shall transfer all female offenders out of division facilities.
Status: Placed in the Assembly inactive file.
LLP position: Support.

SB 836 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ban employment discrimination based on familial status, meaning employers could not discriminate against a person who does or may have to care for another family member.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.
LLP position: Support.

Are African-American women shortchanged?

Continued from page 1

for a growing portion of those new infections (26%)—again most of them through heterosexual contact. About 64% of the new infections in women are among African-Americans. So the incidence of new HIV infections in African-American women is way out of proportion to their representation in the population of this nation. And AIDS is the number-one killer of African-American women aged 25 to 34.

So how do African-American women get help dealing with the health and economic challenges of living with HIV and AIDS? Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California) is the largest funder of care for low-income people with HIV/AIDS. Medicaid covers about 55% of these costs; it is the second highest source of funding for HIV and AIDS care. The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, known simply as "Ryan White," is the third largest source of funding. Unlike Medicaid and Medicare, Ryan White is not a health insurance program. It serves as the payer of last resort for services provided to people with HIV/AIDS who are not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare, but who are low-income and uninsured or underinsured.

These are all federal or federal and state programs combined. Federal funding in 2005 for Ryan White was $2.1 billion. One of the better known programs under the Ryan White CARE Act is the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). This program helps people on a limited income pay for their AIDS drugs. About one-third of all Ryan White funding—$788 million in FY 2005—was earmarked by Congress for ADAP.

A large portion of the funding to care for people with HIV and AIDS comes from the federal government through Medicaid, Medicare, and Ryan White, among other programs. According to a report from the National Health Policy Forum, the breakdown of this federal funding, as of 2005, was as follows:

- Treatment: $11.6 billion (59% of the federal spending)
- Prevention: $0.7 billion (4% of the federal spending)
- Research: $2.9 billion (15% of the federal spending)
- Cash housing assistance: $1.9 billion (10% of the federal spending)
- Global: $2.6 billion (13% of federal spending)
- Other: $0.2 billion (51% of the federal spending) (5)

Congress established the Minority AIDS initiative (MAI) in 1999 as the result of the advocacy of the Congressional Black Caucus to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS among African-Americans. In 2000, Congress expanded the MAI to address the growing needs caused by the epidemic of other ethnic and racial minorities. The MAI was designed to focus special attention on solving a growing public health problem as well as to develop and improve the capacity of minority community-based organizations (CBOs) to serve their communities more effectively.

So the effect of HIV and AIDS on African-American women is huge. Are the resources being directed among these women towards prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS adequate to the challenge? I have done considerable research and talked to people at almost a dozen agencies. It appears that there are *no* federal or state funds specifically targeting African-American women living with HIV/AIDS. Given the seriousness of the problem among African-American women, this seems really wrong.

It has also been very difficult to find data on how much is being spent on prevention and treatment of HIV among African-American women and whether or not their share of funds is proportional to their share of the problem.

However, here is some data that I have been able to find. The Federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) manages much of the federal dollars spent on HIV and AIDS. They report that nearly half of their domestic HIV prevention budget ($300 million) is directed to fighting AIDS in African-American communities. They say that roughly $140 million of these funds goes to state and local health departments that work with local community groups to reach African-American populations.

In addition, they report that $30 million is given directly to community-based organizations that serve the African-American community (6). But this CDC data does not indicate how much of those funds serves African-American women in particular. Similarly a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation says that roughly 61% of participants in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, nationwide are people of color (7). It does not say, however, how many of them are African-American women.

According to the California Office of AIDS, there are currently 31,221 people enrolled in California's ADAP program. Just 9% of them are women and less than one percent of them (659 women) are African-American women. This is a very small percentage when you consider the magnitude of the problem in the African-American women's community. But it results from the fact that the HIV crisis has been around for a very long time, and for much of its history it was concentrated in the gay white male population. However, as I said above, 4% of the people living with AIDS are African-American women. So the ADAP data suggests that a lot of work needs to be done to ensure that African-American women are provided with their fair share of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment resources.

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Governor fails the test

Continued from page 1

this year, in 2006 he got a passing grade on only one issue area.

Some of the governor's vetoes this year were especially cruel. He vetoed a bill (AB 1334) that would have allowed nonprofit groups to distribute condoms in our state prisons. This would have done much to slow the spread of HIV among prisoners and from them to the general public when they are released.

In the economic issue area, the governor vetoed AB 8, which was designed to provide health insurance to all California residents. Health insurance is a big issue. In this state, 6.7 million people have no health insurance, mostly because they cannot afford it. But the governor vetoed SB 137, which would have made it easier for people on a limited income to qualify for the Healthy Families health insurance program.

The governor also vetoed a bill (AB 1413) that would have established tighter compensation rules and greater transparency in compensation for California State University executives. This is particularly important because of the huge increases in tuition rates for students attending our state's public colleges and universities. It is worth noting that my father taught at the City University of New York for 44 years—and for most of that time New York City residents paid *no* tuition to attend that university.

Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill (AB 43) that would have allowed same-sex couples to marry. He also vetoed two bills (AB 537 and SB 727) that would have required employers to allow employees to take time off to care for seriously ill domestic partners, among other family members.

In the people of color issue area, the governor vetoed a bill (AB 174) that would have allowed the State Personnel Board to award attorney's fees to a complainant when the board finds that the state engaged in illegal employment discrimination. As a result, victims of discrimination will still have to pay their own legal fees even when the state has broken the law.

The governor vetoed AB 658, which would have created a pilot project to test ways of reducing a very distressing rate of violence and homicide in African American neighborhoods in the state. This veto was particularly cruel.

LGBTI issue

Continued from page 3

As Representative Barney Frank (D–Mass.) recommends in his bill analysis of both versions of ENDA, discrimination is contrary to our constitutional principles. He is correct: voting on ENDA without the trans-inclusive provision would be inexcusable.

The president has already declared that he will veto any version of ENDA—so why not keep fighting for all members of the LGBT community until such a united version can be passed?

Representative Frank and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D–Calif.), and their allies in Congress, are doing a disservice to the entire LGBT community if they leave trans-inclusive language out of ENDA. LGBT organizations from all over the country have rallied to keep gender identity in the bill—they have united in the fight. Congress is an incredibly important ally that must join the resounding voices in keeping ENDA whole. Excluding the trans community undermines the whole spirit of ENDA.

This is not just a financial or legal issue—it is a human issue. The ability to procure an income is a basic human right that nobody should be denied. Unfortunately, it happens in massive numbers all over the country. Please write Senator Feinstein and ask her to support ENDA explicitly including "gender identity and expression." These words protect not just the transgender community but the LGBT gender nonconforming community at large.

In the women's issue area, the governor vetoed AB 1429 which would have required insurance companies to pay for HPV vaccinations. HPV is a leading cause of the deadly cervical cancer in women. Studies have shown that by age 50, 80% of women are infected with HPV. AB 1429 would have done much to bring down the cervical cancer rate among women—but it just wasn't important enough to the governor.

You can see what the governor did on all the other bills we have been tracking by reviewing the Legislative Update elsewhere in this newsletter. We also hope to post scorecards for the governor and state legislators on our website soon. Please look for them on *lambdaletters.org*; they are linked to from the left-hand navigation area.

Women's issue

Continued from page 4

Most women in the military depend almost entirely on the military health facilities for services and thus have no other avenues for securing pharmaceuticals such as emergency contraception pills. These pills are freely available to all civilian women over the age of 18 without a prescription. It is unthinkable that this basic guarantee cannot also be secured for women serving our country overseas.

According to Senator Clinton, "Women deserve access to EC and our servicewomen are no different. Ensuring that EC is more broadly available at military health care facilities is a fair, commonsense step that everyone should be able to agree on."

The assurances of this bill should be ones that we all support. Just as most Americans would agree that those engaged in military service should be provided with safe and modern equipment to protect themselves, so too should our servicewomen be provided with the necessary medications to protect their bodies.

Unfortunately, this type of legislation has been proposed previously in the House without success. For example, a similar bill (H 2064) was introduced but was never voted on, and so has become stalled. This is why your support of S 1800 now is so critically important. Please urge Senator Dianne Feinstein (D–Calif.) to support this bill and do all she can to assure its passage. We must protect those women who dedicate themselves to protecting us.

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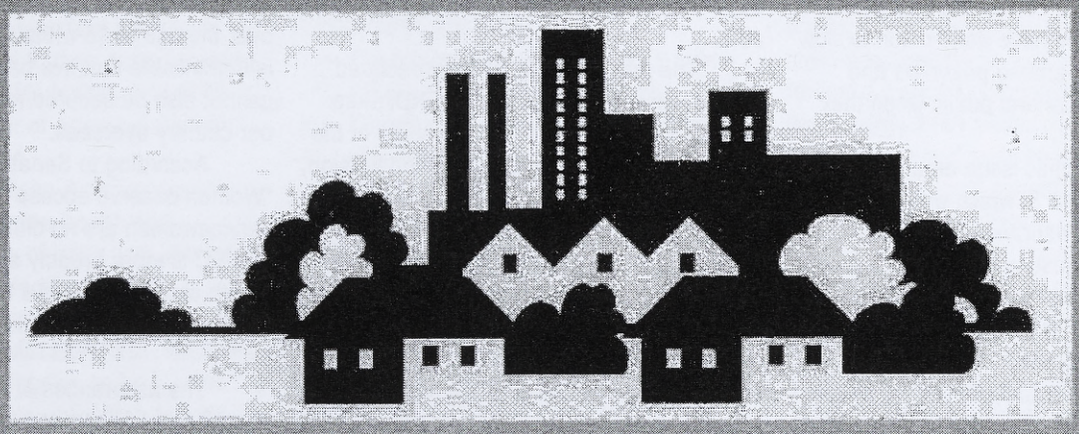

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